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NON-CIRCULATING



HISTORY OF
DOOR COUNTY
WISCONSIN

THE COUNTY BEAUTIFUL

ILLUSTRATED

VOLUME II



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JOSEPH HARRIS, SR.

BIOGRAPHICAL

JOSEPH HARRIS, SR.

Inseparably interwoven with the history of Sturgeon Bay and of Door county is the name of Joseph Harris, Sr., who passed away in January, 1889, but whose memory is yet enshrined in the hearts of those who knew him because of the prominent part which he took in the upbuilding of this section of the country and his active aid of all projects and measures for the general good. He was born in London, England, in 1813 and was about thirty-six years of age when he bade adieu to friends and native land and sailed for America, arriving in New York in 1849. In 1855 he came to Door county, locating at what is now Sturgeon Bay, his first home being an old log building known as the Haskell house. He turned his attention to the real estate business, in which he continued for many years, and his activities constituted an element in promoting the upbuilding and development of this section.

Mr. Harris deserves more than passing notice, as he was one of the organizers of the town of Otumba, now Sturgeon Bay. In company with Henry Schuyler he traveled on foot to Fish Creek, there being no trail north of Sturgeon Bay at the time. The following day the first meeting of the board of county supervisors of Door county was held and Mr. Harris was elected the first secretary of the board and otherwise took an important part in the initial steps which promoted the organization of the county. He and Squire Schuyler then started back by sail boat and were overtaken by a severe storm. The boat was driven across the bay and when it became daylight they discovered that they were at Flat Rock near Escanaba, Michigan. The deck of the boat was covered with ice and snow. In his public activities he ever looked beyond the exigencies of the moment to the needs, the demands and the opportunities of the future. He was chosen first county clerk and register of deeds of Door county and later held the office of county treasurer for a period of six years. In 1864 he was chosen to represent a district comprising three counties in the state senate and was a member of the upper house of the Wisconsin general assembly for two years during that most momentous period in the nation's history. He gave most thoughtful consideration to all the important questions which came up for decision and his aid and influence were always on the side of advancement and improvement. While a member of the senate he framed up the legislation in behalf of the Sturgeon Bay & Lake Michigan Ship Canal & Harbor Company and in 1866 went to Washington, where he procured a grant of two hundred thousand acres of land to assist in the building of the canal. He worked, however, upon the project for twenty-two years before he saw its fulfillment. For twelve years he

acted as private secretary in Washington to Senator Sawyer, who was from this district, and throughout the entire period Mr. Harris put forth every possible effort in behalf of the canal, which was finally completed in 1881. It was built by private enterprise but was eventually purchased by the government. His labors in this connection were stupendous but were at length crowned with success and he well deserves to be known as the father of the Sturgeon Bay & Lake Michigan Ship Canal. There were many other phases of his activity which proved of the greatest possible public worth and his efforts were ever actuated by a most unselfish devotion to the general good. Along still other lines he left the impress of his individuality and became a leader of public thought and action. In 1861 he began the publication of the Door County Advocate in connection with Myron H. McCord and for some time was editor of that paper, of which his sons, Joseph and Harry, afterward became proprietors, conducting it for many years but eventually selling it. His political endorsement was ever given to the republican party from the time of its organization and he never hesitated to express his honest opinions concerning political questions or any of the vital problems concerning city, state or nation. When Sturgeon Bay and southern Door county were swept by fire in 1871 he aided largely in assisting the citizens in again making a start in business. Both necessity and opportunity were to him a call to action and to the call he never failed to make immediate response.

In 1833, when a young man of twenty years, Joseph Harris was united in marriage to Miss Charlotte Singleton, of London, England, and they became the parents of five children: Joseph, now deceased; Harry, a resident of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and Charlotte, Elizabeth and Edith, all of whom have passed away. Having lost his first wife, Joseph Harris was married in 1859 to Miss Susan Perkins, of New York, and they became the parents of five children: Grace, who married Frank Smith and resides in Washington, D. C.; Arthur T., of Sturgeon Bay; Washington, deceased; and Dewey and Mabel, both of whom died in infancy. The two sons of the first marriage, Joseph and Harry, were both veterans of the Civil war. The former rose to the rank of captain and on one occasion was wounded in battle. He was a boat builder by trade and eventually became light keeper at Baileys Harbor, at Green Island, at Dunlap Reef and later at Evanston, Illinois. After he left the lighthouse service he and his son Edward established the Republican, a weekly newspaper at Sturgeon Bay, which they conducted for a few years. For one term he filled the office of postmaster, for one term was also mayor of the city and for some time occupied the office of justice of the peace, discharging his duties with marked capability and fidelity in these different connections. He was likewise honored with election to the office of commander of Henry Schuyler Post, G. A. R., and he ever enjoyed the fullest confidence and the warmest regard of his old army comrades with whom he had followed the stars and stripes on the battlefields of the south. He married Rosanna Rice and they became the parents of four children: Edward, who now resides in Milwaukee; Mrs. Lottie Pfeifer, residing in Sturgeon Bay; and Mabel and Raymond, deceased.

Harry Harris wedded Elizabeth Hanson in 1868 and they have become the parents of two daughters, Edith and Bessie. In early life Harry Harris learned the printer's trade and afterward purchased the Marinette Eagle, which he conducted for a time. Later he removed to Delaware, where he was engaged in

the newspaper business, and he is now in Philadelphia, where he is associated with the publication known as the Practical Farmer. The sons, "to the manner born," early became connected with newspaper interests and have continued active along that line during the greater part of their lives.

The daughter, Elizabeth Harris, now deceased, became the wife of Jesse Birmingham in 1860 and they resided at West Pensaukee, Oconto county, Wisconsin. It was Mr. Birmingham who brought the first team of horses to Door county in the '50s and he aided in cutting the timber where Sturgeon Bay now stands. He also carried the mail between Sturgeon Bay and Green Bay and later removed to Oconto county, where he engaged in lumbering and farming.

Charlotte Harris, in 1860, became the wife of David McIntosh, who was one of the early settlers of Door county, and they removed to Englewood, then a suburb but now a part of Chicago, where she passed away in 1915.

Edith Harris was married in 1871 to Isaac C. Slater and they resided at Washington, D. C., but she has now departed this life.

Arthur T. Harris, of this family, was born in Sturgeon Bay in 1867 and was a youth of seventeen years when he first became connected with the Door County Advocate, with which he was associated for eighteen and one-half years. He then spent a few months in other connections but returned and has since been identified with the Door County Democrat. He is today secretary and treasurer of the Door County Publishing Company. He married Harriett Higgins and they have become parents of two children, Dorothy and Sumner. He is a member of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows and is an active worker and loyal supporter of the Congregational church, in which he has served as trustee, as deacon and as secretary of the Sunday school. His political endorsement has always been unfalteringly given to the republican party but the honors and emoluments of office have had no attraction for him. He is much interested in boating and when leisure affords indulges his taste in that direction. Through the columns of his paper and individually he has continued the work instituted by his father for the benefit of city and county and has been a coöperant factor along many lines which have led to the later upbuilding and progress of this section of the state.

BERT CARMODY.

On the roster of public officials in Door county appears the name of Bert Carmody who is filling the office of register of deeds and in this position is making an excellent record for capable and faithful service. He had previously been well known as a substantial business man and his fellow citizens, recognizing his worth, called him to public office. He was born in Egg Harbor, February 6, 1882, a son of Dennis and Mary (Hanarahan) Carmody, who were natives of Ohio and Wisconsin respectively. The father came to Wisconsin with his parents when but two years of age. He took up the occupation of farming, purchasing land near Egg Harbor, which he improved and cultivated until 1908. He then retired from active business life and removed to Sturgeon Bay, where he has since resided, enjoying

the fruits of his former toil. In 1908, he was called upon to mourn the loss of his wife, who passed away on the 12th of March of that year.

Bert Carmody was reared and educated in Door county and remained with his parents until he attained his majority. He then entered the employ of the Reynolds Preserving Company and remained with them for eleven years, during which time he made all contracts for the products which were canned. In September, 1916, he was elected to the office of register of deeds, in which capacity he is now capably serving.

On the 31st of December, 1907, Mr. Carmody was united in marriage to Miss Catherine Scholl, and they have one son, Raymond, born August 28, 1909. The parents are members of the Catholic church and Mr. Carmody belongs to the Catholic Order of Foresters and also to the Mystic Workers. His political allegiance has always been given to the republican party and in matters of citizenship he stands for progress and improvement.

HERBERT L. PETERSON

Herbert L. Peterson, banker, merchant and prominent business man, connected with various important commercial and financial interests of Sturgeon Bay, was born on the 16th of May, 1876, in the city where he still resides, his parents being Peter and Mary (Mathews) Peterson. The father was born in Norway and was a son of Andrew Peterson, a native of Stavanger, Norway, whence he came to the United States with his family about 1842, establishing his home in the Empire state. There he resided until the early '50s, when he removed to Door county, Wisconsin, and became a resident of Sturgeon Bay. Here he engaged in business both as a farmer and ship carpenter. His son, Peter Peterson, was but a young lad when the family home was established here, so that he was reared amid the scenes and environments of pioneer life. Following the outbreak of the Civil war in 1861, he responded to the country's call for troops, becoming a member of Company H, Twelfth Wisconsin Infantry. He was wounded near Atlanta, Georgia, in 1863 and was sent home to die. He lived, however, but was a cripple throughout his remaining days. His death occurred in March, 1907, but his widow, who was born in De Pere, Wisconsin, still survives. Peter Peterson had always followed the occupation of farming and thus provided for the support of his family. He gave his political allegiance to the republican party and he maintained pleasant relations with his old army comrades through his membership in the Grand Army of the Republic. He also belonged to the Moravian church, of which Mrs. Peterson is still a member. She is a daughter of Martin Mathews, one of the pioneer settlers of Green Bay, Wisconsin. He was a native of Ireland and at the time of the Civil war joined the army and gave his life in defense of the Union.

Herbert L. Peterson was the fourth in order of birth in a family of twelve children. He acquired a public school education and started out in business life as clerk in a general store at Sturgeon Bay, a part of his duty being the driving of a delivery wagon. He thus began his initial experience along commercial lines and, prompted by a laudable ambition, he saved his earnings until his industry

and economy had brought him sufficient capital to enable him to engage in business on his own account. About 1899 he opened a general store in Sawyer as one of the partners in the firm of E. N. Anderson & Company. Later he conducted business under his own name and afterward admitted Joseph Hoslett to a partnership, the firm being now Peterson & Hoslett. They still conduct a general merchandise establishment and the business has long since become a profitable one. Mr. Peterson entered the banking business in March, 1902, when the Bank of Sawyer was organized, of which he became vice president, and the following year he took active charge as cashier. In 1914 this bank was reorganized and removed to Sturgeon Bay, at which time the name was changed to the Door County State Bank, Mr. Peterson at that time assuming the presidency. This is now one of the leading and progressive financial institutions of the county, capitalized for fifty thousand dollars. About 1907 Mr. Peterson also became vice president of the Sturgeon Bay Stone Quarry and in 1911 was elected to the presidency. He is interested in several other important business enterprises of the county and is a contributing factor to the material progress and development of this section of the state.

On the 8th of September, 1904, Mr. Peterson was united in marriage to Miss Martha I. Speigelberg, a daughter of Emil and Mary Speigelberg, the former a druggist, now deceased. Mr. and Mrs. Peterson have become the parents of two children: Blanche, twelve years of age; and Herbert L., who is but a year old.

Fraternally Mr. Peterson is connected with the Independent Order of Odd Fellows. In politics he is a republican and for six years has served as chairman of the republican county central committee, taking an active interest in promoting the growth and ensuring the success of his party. He was also elected presidential elector in Wisconsin in 1908 when William Howard Taft was elected president. For six years he has lived on his farm near Sturgeon Bay, where he has an orchard of sixty-five acres. His has been an active and useful life, fraught with good results and crowned with successful accomplishment. Moreover, he belongs to that class of representative citizens, who while promoting individual interests contribute also to the general prosperity, welfare and upbuilding.

JOSEPH KERSCHER

Joseph Kerscher, who follows farming in Forestville township, is a representative of one of the pioneer families of Door county. This district was still largely wild and undeveloped when the family home was established within its borders and for a long period they shared in the hardships and privations of frontier life but came to enjoy the benefits of intelligently directed labor. Joseph Kerscher was born in Manitowoc, Wisconsin, on the 22d of March, 1868, and is a son of Anton and Mary (Brectel) Kerscher, who were natives of Germany. There they were reared and married. On coming to the United States they settled in Manitowoc, Wisconsin, where the father followed farming. He afterward removed to Forestville township, Door county, and purchased eighty acres of land which he converted into productive fields, devoting his attention to general farm-

ing until his death. He was a democrat in his political views and both he and his wife were members of the Catholic church. She, too, has passed away.

Joseph Kerscher spent his boyhood in Manitowoc and in Forestville township, Door county, remaining with his father upon the home farm and gaining broad experience in every phase of agricultural life. At length he was married and purchased his present farm in 1893. He has since resided thereon, concentrating his efforts and attention upon its further development, and has made it one of the well improved properties in the neighborhood.

On October 19, 1892, Mr. Kerscher was married to Miss Katie Immel, a daughter of James and Katie (Hoover) Immel, who were natives of Germany and became early settlers of Door county, crossing the Atlantic in 1877. They settled in this county and in 1903 took up their abode in Forestville. The father has passed away but the mother is still living at the age of seventy-four years. Mrs. Kerscher was born in Algoma, Wisconsin, and by her marriage has become the mother of seven children: Leopold, Engelbert, Clement, Irene, Henry, Gabriel and Cecelia.

In his political views Mr. Kerscher is a democrat but has never been an office seeker, preferring to concentrate his energies and attention upon his farm, which comprises one hundred and forty acres of productive land. He is a man of diligence and determination and his energy is bringing him success. His memory compasses the period when this country was wild and unsettled. His parents had to clear the land in order to plant crops. There was much wild game in the district and Indians were frequently seen, showing that the seeds of civilization had scarcely been planted on the western frontier. Mr. Kerscher has lived to witness remarkable changes and has borne his part in the agricultural development of the district.

ISIDOR BRANDEIS.

Isidor Brandeis, actively engaged in the grain and elevator business in Sturgeon Bay, comes to the new world from Austria, his birth having occurred on the 1st of October, 1860, in Prague, Bohemia. He is a son of Sigmund and Eva Brandeis and remained under the parental roof until he reached the age of seventeen years, when in 1877 he crossed the Atlantic to the new world, establishing his home in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Two years later he was joined by his mother. He continued to reside in Milwaukee until 1893, when he disposed of the mercantile business which he had been conducting and then came to Sturgeon Bay. Here he entered into partnership with M. Teweles in the grain, seed and elevator business. They began business in a small way, but Mr. Brandeis has gradually developed and increased his interests and is now part owner of two large elevators and is conducting a wholesale grain trade. They have also enlarged their warehouse and are owners of ten acres of land and several lots in the third ward of the city. They also built and own the docks that are leased by the Sawyer Lumber Company. This is the bare outline of his business career, but those who reflect for a moment upon the record will recognize the fact that to have accomplished what he has done, building a business of such extensive pro-

portions, must have taken the closest application, the keenest sagacity and the most unflinching enterprise. He has thoroughly studied everything in regard to the grain trade, the crops, the buying, the sales and the shipment, and by his earnest efforts he has won a position among the leading grain merchants of this section of the state.

On the 20th of June, 1888, Mr. Brandeis was married to Miss Fanny Teweles, a daughter of Mr. Teweles of Sturgeon Bay, and they have become the parents of six children. Nana, the oldest, born March 20, 1890, completed a high school course and for four years was a student in the Milwaukee Normal School. She is now the wife of Harry Newman, a commercial salesman of Milwaukee. Irma, the second of the family, was born May 28, 1896. Sigmund died in infancy and a baby boy died at five days, both being buried in Bayside. Lucille, born in April, 1900, is attending high school. Stanley, born in August 1904, completes the family.

Mr. Brandeis holds membership with the Masons, the Odd Fellows and the Modern Woodmen and is loyal to the teachings and purposes of these organizations. He is the president of the Twenty Club and a member of the Commercial Club. In politics he is a republican and has taken a very active and helpful interest in public affairs. He served for one year as alderman and for the past eight years has been police commissioner. Several times he was county chairman of the republican central committee. He and Mr. Long were the first to suggest the establishment of a public library. It required five years for them to create public sentiment resulting in the council endorsing and providing for the movement. He circulated the petition for the lot and fought the idea of receiving tainted money for the institution. He is thoroughly American in spirit and in interests and has been a most effective and earnest worker for the upbuilding of his city and the advance of its material and moral progress, standing at all times for those interests and activities which are matters of civic virtue and of civic pride. He never has had occasion to wish that he had remained in his native land, for he found here the opportunities which he sought, readily recognizing and utilizing the chances for advancement and making payment for the advantages here received in capable and efficient service for the public welfare.

JOHN F. BERTSCHINGER

John F. Bertschinger, who engaged in business in Egg Harbor as a dealer in grain, potatoes and produce, in lumber, shingles and cement, came to Door county in 1904. He is a native of Switzerland, his birth having occurred in the land of the Alps, November 21, 1875. His parents were John and Bertha (Hoefler) Bertschinger, who were also natives of that country, whence they came to the new world in 1884. The father had followed the occupation of farming in Switzerland and in the new world he took up his abode in Milwaukee county, Wisconsin, where he managed a large herd of cattle. Later he was actively engaged in farming on his own account, successfully tilling his fields for many years, but at the present time he is living retired from active business, he and his wife being now residents of Port Washington, Wisconsin.